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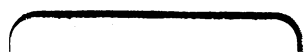
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A BUSH GIRL'S SONGS





Rena Wallace

AGS

BY

IRMA WALLACE

SYDNEY

ANGUS AND ROBERTSON

89 CASTLEREAGH STREET.

1905



Rena W.

A BUSH GIRL'S SONGS

BY

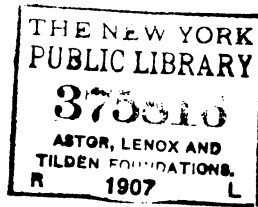
'RENA WALLACE

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1905



WEBSDALE, SHOOSMITH & Co., Printers, Sydney

TO FRIENDS
OLD AND YOUNG NEAR AND FAR

CONTENTS

	PAGE
MY LADY'S LAMP	
High up within her vine-enwreathèd tow'r - - -	1
CONFITEOR	
Shall I tell thee that I love thee, - - -	3
BY LEAF AND STREAM	
Come, my Beloved, my summer flow'r, - - -	6
AND IF ALL THIS	
I love you much : for when the fragrant morn,	11
MATIN SONG	
Darling, are your tresses braided - - -	13
MARGUERITE	
"He loves me well—he loves me not," - - -	15
MEETING AND PARTING	
Sweetheart, the night is over all, - - -	17

	PAGE
AT TWILIGHT	
When clouds athwart the heavens sail, - -	19
EVENING BREEZES	
When the moon—a silver sickle— - -	22
TO FLO	
If wish of mine, on this your natal day, - -	24
THEN WOULD I	
When evening binds upon her brow - -	25
THE LOVERS	
I saw, when morning's softest rays - -	27
REGRET	
I heard faint footsteps, falling, falling, - -	30
LOVE'S PLEASURES	
'Tis pleasant thro' the tedious day - - -	31
THE VISION	
Methought I stood at eventide, - - -	33
SWEET SINGING BIRD	
Sweet singing bird ! thy silv'ry notes - -	39

CONTENTS

ix

PAGE

BEREFT

It was a piteous sight to see— - - 41

THE OLD DIAL

There is a dial in a garden old— - - 43

TO MARY

Oh, Mary !—in whose steadfast eyes - - 45

A CONTEMPLATION

One early morn I rose from out my bed, - 46

DOROTHY

Dorothy, Dorothy, merry and fair, - - 49 ✓

ROSES AND MEMORIES

Oh, withered roses, plucked one happy day - - 51

WHEN SUMMER COMES

Dear love ! the day is almost done, and scented
winds are blowing, - - - 53

COULD I RECALL

Could I recall the sweetest hour - - - 57

IF

If only we were children still, - - - 59

	PAGE
DISILLUSION	
No moon, and not a star to show the way, -	61
'TIS MAY	
'Tis May! it is May! and the children are thronging - - - - -	64
LOVE AND HOPE	
Years, years ago, within a garden—fair - -	65
AT MIDNIGHT	
They laid her to rest when the pale morn was shining, - - - - -	71
THEY TELL ME	
They tell me you are happy, dear— - -	73
REMEMBER	
If you should waken on some distant morning	75
DE PROFUNDIS	
Was there ever striving stranger?— - -	77
THE VOYAGERS	
A gray-white bird thro' the morn's soft seas -	80

CONTENTS

xi

PAGE

CANCIONET

Yea, I have let a thousand dreams - - 83

FOR HER

There is no little heart so sweet - - - 84

TO KNOW

That these two souls, who loved each other so 86

LOVE AND FAITH

I will not think you did not love me - - 89

ISOLT

How late the hour when Isolt passed - - 91

ENSHRINED

Deep hidden in my heart of hearts - - 96

A MEMORY

The moon from out the dreaming sea, - - 98

I WONDER

I wonder if you ever heave a sigh - - - 102

LUCY

Little river, bright and fleet, - - - 104

	PAGE
DOROTHY, I LOVE YOU	
Oh, Dorothy, the sun is high, - - -	106
ACACIA	
I would not give my one dear friend - -	108
MARIA	
What time the rosy shafts of breezy morning	110
HER PORTRAIT	
Her eyes are miracles of light - - -	112
A DREAM	
Ah Hope !—my Hope ! - - -	114
MY DEAR ONE	
Sweet are the wind's soft sighs - -	116
PITY ME	
Ask me no more to tell thee that I love thee—	118
FORGOTTEN	
And can it be so short a while - -	120
SHADOWS	
Yea, though athwart the sullen brow of night	122

CONTENTS

xiii

PAGE

BUT ONE OF THESE

Were I a bird with silver throat - - - 123

IN MEMORIAM

Sleep well and soundly, Noble One, - - 125

A REVERIE

I thought the harp for ever slept, - - - 129

ONE WORD

I did but ask one little word - - - 131

FAREWELL, BELOVED

Farewell, beloved !—our star hath set— - - 132

THE WEDDING DAY

Jasper chants a joyful theme - - - 134

GOOD-NIGHT

“ Good-night, good-night,” she said, and bending
over - - - 138

A BUSH GIRL'S SONGS



MY LADY'S LAMP

HIGH up within her vine-enwreathèd tow'r
My lady's lamp hangs like a silver star
That glows and shimmers thro' the mystic hour
When day and dark at tender variance are.

The ambient air breathes in the poplar trees,
So low, so sweet, the leaves stir whisp'ringly;
And my thrilled soul is like to one of these,
Trembling beneath love's breath of ecstasy.

Red Rose aspiring to her window-sill—
Tell me, thou brave and passionate Red Rose,
Leaning so close, her charms are thine at will,
What radiant looks her lamp's soft beams disclose?

Brown tresses shot with gold and all unbound?—
Brown cheeks whereon the ruddy sun's kiss lies?—

Warm lips whose sweets thine own warm hues con-
found!

And love-light burning deep in soft, brown eyes?

All these and more!—Oh, brave and happy bloom,
Daring to climb, where I to gaze scarce dare—
What fate more blest than that thy rich perfume
Be spent like incense, in adoring her?

Yet, Red Rose, am I happier than thou
Tho' to thy damask kiss her kiss should cleave,
For she is mine by every Heav'n-pledged vow
The lips can utter, or the heart conceive!

Climb where thou wilt, thou sweetly-favoured one,
Distil thy fragrance in her lamp's soft light;
To-morrow is my day, when thine is done—
So, till to-morrow, my Beloved, good-night!

CONFITEOR

SHALL I tell thee that I love thee,
That my heart is thine for ever,
That without thy love, the whole wide world is
desolate and drear ?
That the trembling stars above me,
And the music of the river,
Lose their brightness and their tenderness, when thou
art not anear ?

Shall I tell thee that the morning
Hath no beauty in its breaking—
That the dew upon my casement holds the semblance
of a tear ?
That the vestal white adorning
Virgin blossoms in their waking
Hath a blur upon its purity when thou art not anear ?

Shall I tell thee that the falling
 . Of the cool, soft robe of gloaming,
 Hath not half the mystic sweetness that enhanced it
 yester-year?
 That the wood-dove's gentle calling,
 And the Zephyr's idle roaming,
 Have a sadness in their monotones, when thou art not
 anear?

.
 Should I whisper this confession
 Of my inmost heart's devotion,
 Would it bring in answer to its voice the love of
 yester-year?
 Would'st thou give a sweet expression,
 To the heavenly emotion
 That was thine for me, oh, Well-Belovèd, when thou
 wert anear?

.
 Let me tell thee that I love thee—
 That my heart is in thy keeping—

That bereft of thee, the whole wide world is desolate
and drear—

That the very stars above me

When the careless world is sleeping,
Pale, in sorrow at my loneliness, when thou art not
anear !

BY LEAF AND STREAM

COME, my Beloved, my summer flow'r,
My throstle and my treasure,
Night-birds, from ev'ry woodland bow'r
Pour forth wild notes of pleasure ;
Moonbeams from each secluded nook
The shadow-elves are chasing,
And sweet, vain stars, in pool and brook
Their own bright selves are tracing.

Let us away where fairy folk
Dance 'mid the scented clover,
This silver mist shall be your cloak,
The dew your white foot's cover :
And, if the night air chill your breast
My arm is nigh to warm you,
Close in its ardent compass prest
No wind on earth can harm you !

Youth is the sweetest time of life
And love youth's sweetest measure,
Come, let us roam where joys are rife
And hearts attuned to pleasure!
Gaily we'll trip with wingèd speed
O'er sloping hill and hollow
Where elfin feet may chance to lead
We shall not fear to follow!

The laughing breezes as we fly
Shall greet our cheeks with kisses,
And in our ears exultantly
Shall breathe a thousand blisses.
'Tis good to sport beneath the moon,
Forgetful of the morrow,
While fairy lips in fairy rune
Forbid one thought of sorrow.

.

I know the silv'riest-singing stream
That winds about the meadow,
Its leaping bubbles glance and gleam
'Twixt light and gentlest shadow:

Its tinkling waves slip blithely by
With cool-lipt soft caresses,
And languid o'er its bosom lie
The love-lorn willows' tresses.

I know a sweet boat wondrous light
For lovers' pastimes builded,
A slim oar, tapering and white
That many a moon hath gilded :
And, eager on the whisp'ring stream
She sits, slight, trim, and airy,
So graceful poised, she well might seem
The shallop of a fairy.

.

Mark, Love, how deep the shadows lie
Here on the dreamful river :
The timid moonbeams wand'ring by
Forbear to dance and quiver :
E'en on the tender shade's soft rim
Where water-blossoms cluster,
The ripples, slumberous and dim,
Own but the faintest lustre.

Like incense thro' the leafy gloom,
Where fire-fly lamps are swinging,
The trumpet-lily's chalice bloom
Its scented breath is flinging.
Here, let us moor our boat awhile—
The young night smiles before us,
And calm may well one hour beguile
When all delights hang o'er us.

.

Dear Love, in this mysterious light
Your face gleams forth a lily,
Exquisite-smooth, divinely white,
Grave, and remote, and chilly.
Some mystic presence, vague and new,
From passion seems to hold you,
And these fond arms, that ache for you,
Are fearful to enfold you.

Your form hath such enchanted mien,
You seem scarce like a woman—
Almost, I fear, I have mista'en
A phantom for a human—

But your bright eyes, so warm their glow,
They half from fear exempt me,
How can I mind the lily's snow
With suns like those to tempt me ?

.

'Tis long past night's mid-hour, my Sweet,
The still dawn soon shall lighten,
And morning's swift-shod, rosy feet
The woody pathways brighten.
The happiest fays that haunt the night
Have ceased their sportive number,
And soft adown her western height
The moon hath dropt to slumber.

With poppy-heads your eyes are weighed
And heavy droop their curtain,
And envious languor now hath made
Your lightsome step uncertain
Go, seek that satin-covered nest
Your chamber white, adorning,
Angels will sweetly guard your rest
With dreams, till widest morning !

AND IF ALL THIS

I LOVE you much : for when the fragrant morn,
Her roseate fingers thrusts my curtains through,
Bidding me mark how beautiful the dawn
Crowned with her mist, and shod with pearly dew,
I wake : and, gazing over meadows fair
Where only birds disturb the dreamful calm,
My thoughts speed upward, winged with this soft
pray'r,
That Heav'n will shield my dear from every harm.
And, if all this my passion may not prove,
Tell me, I pray, how must I truly love ?

What time the cool dawn broadens into day
Whereunder all the earth grows faint with heat ;
When flow'rs have met the sadness of decay,
And birds sit, panting, in each dim retreat ;

I can look backward to my love's fair dawn
Or onward to the ev'ning of its charm
And that fond pray'r, of my devotion born,
Ascends once more, "God keep my dear from
harm."

And, if all this your credence will not move,
How shall I tell you that, in truth, I love ?

And, when the bright moon in an azure sky
Sails out beyond the shadow of the hills,
Shedding her virgin lustre timidly
Upon the loveliest of woodland rills ;
When sweet birds sing with tender minstrelsy
That sounds like low lament for vanished joys—
"Ah, Heav'n," I say, "how glad this night would be
"Were he but here to bless me with his voice!"
And, if all this my passion may not prove,
Tell me, my dear, how must I feel to love ?

MATIN SONG

DARLING, are your tresses braided
 Into smooth and proper seeming ?
Or upon your downy pillow
 Are you still profoundly dreaming ?
Open those bright eyes, my dear,
 Morning bathes the world in gold,
Song of wood-bird, wild and clear,
Tells that youthful day is here—
Open those bright eyes, my dear,
 Day will soon be old !

Darling, is your purple bodice
 Ready for this day of pleasure ?
Or in those glad dreams that claim you
 Have you donned some newer treasure ?
Open those bright eyes, my love,
 E'en the sails impatient wait,

Our swift boat, a grey-white dove,
Longs to spread its wings and move.
Open those bright eyes, my love,
Do not keep us late !

Darling, wake ! the morning breezes
Whistle, salt-keen, o'er the ocean,
Sparkling waves with foamy summits
Surge in musical commotion.
Open those bright eyes, my sweet,
Joyously the wide sails shake,
Eager for the movement fleet
Wind and sail in rapture meet.
Open those bright eyes, my sweet,
Wake, my darling, wake !

MARGUERITE

“ He loves me well—he loves me not,”
Sighed Marguerite, with pensive air,
Plucking her name-flow’rs petals, one
By one, in sweetly-feigned despair.
But, underneath their down-drooped lids,
Her laughing eyes a challenge shot,
And danced the while her lips declared
“ He loves me well—he loves me not.”

In tender mood, September’s sun
A soft and gentle lustre shed,
And, glowing, like a halo, hung
All gold above her shining head.
So potent were her beamy looks,
The youth his bashfulness forgot,
And whispered, “ Nay, the blossom lies,
That says thy lover loves thee not ! ”

“ And is it that he loves me well ? ”

She said, and lifted glist’ning eyes,
Still plucking at the petals fair,

In soft and sweetly-feigned surprise;
Then opening wide his arms, he let

His lips and looks their answer tell—
And stealing to his heart, she sighed,

“ In very truth he loves me well ! ”

MEETING AND PARTING

SWEETHEART, the night is over all,
A thousand stars are gleaming ;
The moon hath raised a silver pall,
Whereunder I am dreaming,
Love,
Whereunder I am dreaming !

The perfumed breeze, in cadence low,
Foretells our tender meeting,
And streamlets in their liquid flow
Are whisp'ring of our greeting,
Love,
Are whisp'ring of our greeting !

Then come thou forth, my heart's delight,
Nor pause to think on sorrow ;

For lips that sing of joy to-night
Will sing of joy to-morrow,
Love,
Will sing of joy to-morrow !

.

Sweetheart, farewell, the hour hath sped—
A thousand stars are weeping ;
The moon hath sought her ocean-bed
And pallidly is sleeping,
Love,
And pallidly is sleeping !

The midnight breeze, in grieving mood,
Complains that we must sever ;
And streams breathe to the list'ning wood
A passionate " forever,"
Love,
A passionate " forever !"

Then fare-thee-well, my heart's delight,
The hour is dark with sorrow ;
And lips that sing of joy to-night
Must sing of pain to-morrow,
Love,
Must sing of pain to-morrow !

AT TWILIGHT

WHEN clouds athwart the heavens sail,
The azure dome but half revealing,
And o'er mine own beloved vale
The liquid Angelus is pealing ;
When, in the erstwhile glowing west,
One little star is softly smiling,
Then tender fancies haunt my breast,
To peace my troubled heart beguiling.

I see the valley wrapped in rest,
The blue hills sentinel above it
That lift a high and misty crest
O'er the green vale, and guard and love it ;
And, through the yellow-tassel'd corn,
The river leaps, and laughs, and glistens,
While musing, lonely and forlorn,
The pensive willow stands and listens.

I see the cottage where the red
 Red roses riot round the casement ;
The violet, in its modest bed,
 Bowed low, as tho' in meek effacement ;
The honeysuckle climbing high,
 Each sheltered path and nook adorning,
And—loveliest flower of memory—
 Her face outshining radiant morning.

Oh ! many a time and oft of old
 We clomb those purple heights together,
Rifing the wattle's fragrant gold
 Or culling bloomy purple heather ;
And down that far-off silver thread,
 Singing between its banks benignly,
Oh ! many a time our swift boat sped,
 The while our warm love burned divinely.

They bloomed and withered long ago
 The dreams that lit my youth with gladness ;
Their buds were nurtured by the glow,
 Delusive hope sheds o'er earth's sadness ;

AT TWILIGHT

And as each petal fell apart,
Its perfume thro' the air distilling,
Oh ! every breath that reached my heart
Set all its ardent pulses thrilling.

Ah ! heavenly hour that brings to me
Peace, that enfolds my soul completely !
Ah ! heavenly bell, whose melody
Dies, on the trembling air, too fleetly !
When life's sad twilight closes round
And Death writes *finis* to my story,
Be ye the perfect hour and sound
That waft me to eternal glory !

EVENING BREEZES

WHEN the moon—a silver sickle—
Hangs upon the sky,
Evening breezes, light and fickle,
Wanton idly by ;
Pressing on the budlea's tresses
Briefest butterfly caresses
Tendered sportively.

Sighing where a virgin lily
In her cool bed blows—
Shedding fragrance, chaste and chilly,
Through her calm repose.
Ling'ring in the tend'rest fashion,
Tinged by breath of sweetest passion
On a crimson rose.

Dreaming over clover-meadows
Drowsily and slow ;
Whispering among the shadows
Where the wheat-ears grow ;
Kissing all th' azalea-flowers
Till their white leaves fall in showers
Of the softest snow.

Waking sound whose incompleteness
Ravishes, yet grieves ;
Shaking notes of siren-sweetness
From the poplar leaves—
Then away with blithesome singing,
Airy laughter backward flinging
Joyance that deceives.

When the moon—a silver sickle—
Hangs upon the sky,
Evening breezes, light and fickle
Wanton idly by—
Lighter than the lightest human—
Falsar than the falsest woman—
Love they, woo, and fly !

TO FLO

If wish of mine, on this your natal day,
Were turned to sunshine and all radiant things,
There would not be a shadow on your way,
Nor any blight in time's most blighting wings.
There would not be a cloud to dim the light
Of happiness your heart should ever hold ;
And every path you trod should be as bright
As that blest track, which Jacob saw of old.
Your kindly hand and grief's should never meet,
And where you stood no woe should come anear,
And love and friendship be the powers sweet
To guide you. Can I wish you more, my dear ?

THEN WOULD I

WHEN evening binds upon her brow
Her starry crown, all jewel-bright,
And twilight's fast decreasing glow
Dies in the arms of night ;
When from her couch of opal hue
The broad moon shows her silver face,
And rises in the lucent blue
Her radiant course to trace,
Then would I that my love might be,
The brightest of bright hopes to thee.

When jasper wavelets lap the shore,
And upward flash light jets of spray,
Singing the same song o'er and o'er,
Like children at their play ;
When ripples press on sounding shells
The rapture of their pearly kiss,

Thus waking them like fairy bells
To tinkling notes of bliss,
Then would I that my kiss might be
The kiss of all most dear to thee !

When Summer breathes upon her lyre
The songs she most delights to hear,
And pensive sighs of love expire
O'er meadow-land and mere ;
When from the heart of grassy hills
As though some kindred stream to meet
The gushing forth of crystal rills
Makes music soft and sweet,
Then would I that my name might be
The sweetest of all sounds to thee !

THE LOVERS

I SAW, when morning's softest rays
 Shone gold and crimson in the sky—
Reminders of mine own bright days—
 Two youthful lovers wander by.
Hope strewed the path beneath their feet
 With joys that blossomed as they fell,
And their glad tones, in converse sweet,
 Rang clearer than a silver bell.
Their young eyes beamed : their fond lips smiled :
 Their steps were light as lightest air—
And happiness the hours beguiled,
 For Love seemed breathing everywhere.

I saw them when the aging day
 Was fainting under noontide heat,

The slow hours dragged themselves away
And Hope's flow'rs died beneath their feet :
The light that filled their eyes at morn
Was gone : their lips' gay laughter fled
And happiness, sad and forlorn,
Stood mutely by, with covered head ;
But Love was still their gentle guest
And life seemed yet a precious thing,
For where Love is, there also Rest
Scorns not to fold his hallowed wing

And once again when eve was nigh
And misty stars in pity shone,
I watched : and, bent in agony,
I saw but one drear form alone ;
Her wild eyes rained unceasing tears,
Her strained lips writhed in wild despair—
It might have seemed in all her years
Not once had gladness sparkled there.
The high-heaped mound, whereon she pressed
Her kisses hot and passionate,
Told what rude hand had torn her breast
And, ruthless, left it desolate.

And yet again, when midnight skies
Were swept with shadows strange and fleet,
I looked: there met my grieving eyes
No form but solitude complete.
Two high-heaped mounds that side by side
Lay wet beneath night's cold caress
Marked where at radiant morning-tide
I saw them walk in happiness.
And, even as I gazed, the sod
Grew green above that lonely spot—
The very path on which they trod
And where they slumber was forgot.

REGRET

I HEARD faint footsteps, falling, falling,
Close beneath my window-pane—
And voices from the Past came calling
On my heart again.
I drew the curtains fast, and bade
My shudd'ring soul reject the sound—
They crossed beyond the casement's shade
And entrance to my chamber found.
"Why leave ye, in the hour of sleep,
Your narrow graves, long-filled?" I said;
"We come (as was our wont) to keep
Our midnight watch beside your bed"
I hear sad tear-drops, falling, falling,
Drear as Autumn's mournful rain,
And voices from the Bygone calling
Pierce my heart again.

LOVE'S PLEASURES

'Tis pleasant thro' the tedious day
To think of eventide,
When work and cares are put away
And we sit side by side,
Like two glad children blithe and free
Conversing long and happily.

'Tis pleasant in the summer dusk
To wander hand in hand,
The spicy breath of mountain musk
Pervading all the land ;
Our slow steps wand'ring on and on,
Our thoughts in sweetest unison.

'Tis pleasant thro' the dewy night
To lie at ease and dream

Of swift hours passed in pure delight
By mead and hill and stream ;
And oh ! 'tis joy when night is flown,
To wake and find love still our own !

THE VISION

METHOUGHT I stood at eventide,
Alone, with heavy heart and sore,
Where waves washed in, and sobbing, died
In anguish on the shore.

Not any living thing was there
Save I, and one lone bird, whose mate
Had flown to shore, than this more fair,
And left her desolate.

Methought the hornèd moon that hung
Against th' expansive vault on high
A pale and feeble lustre flung
O'er earth and sea and sky.

And as I gazed across the deep
Whereon the fainting moonbeam smote,
I saw above th' horizon creep
A solitary boat.

So smooth her progress in the wind
I scarce could see her wan sail shake,
No spray flashed up before—behind
She left no silver wake.

Her curvèd prow bore strange design,
Fashioned with unimagined grace,
By mystic hands—the shape benign
Of a young angel's face.

Her sails were as the cloud that casts
Augmenting gloom above the night,
And hung about her slender masts
Shroud-like in the dim light.

Her mirror'd image in the tide
Stretched a gaunt reflex far ahead—
Shade of a shade—that to my side
Its sombre carpet spread.

Then on my grieving eyes there dawned
A form the which I knew of old
And dearly loved and deeply mourned
When he was still and cold.

His mortal kiss had long been dead
Upon these mortal lips of mine,
The lustre by his deep eye shed
Had long since ceased to shine.

And he 'twas, who from that weird ship
Stepped forth and drew to me anigh,
With troubled brow and pensive lip
And said, "Love, it is I!"

It seemed my widowed love might start
To fire 'neath his returnèd gaze,
That swift relumed the lamp, my heart
Quenched with his ended days.

But long his eyes looked in mine eyes
And long his kisses met my kiss,
And sad the burthen of the sighs
That broke my breath and his.

And slow his tears in mournful rain
Fell mutely on my wond'ring face,
Nor knew I anything but pain
Held in that strange embrace.

I wound my arms about him, warm
And fast, and said, "What ails thee, love?
What pow'r hath sent thy spectral form
Back to this lonely cove?"

"Why steeredst thou thy phantom boat
Thro' these sad waves—to this dun shore
Where sounds of desolation float
Around, for evermore?"

"And askest thou what pow'r hath sent
My yearning spirit to thy side?
Wherefore my phantom bark hath bent
Her course above this tide?"

"Those tears of thine, Beloved," he said,
"That nightly drench thy mourning eyes—
These are the strong and subtle thread
That, welded with thy sighs,


“Draws me to this drear meeting-place
And binds me close to earth unblest,
Nor lets me pass before the face
Of Him who giveth rest.

“This soul may enter not the gate
Of heav’n, the while thy cheeks are wet
For that it leaves thee desolate—
Nay, e’en one faint regret

“For joys that fade with fading earth,
Weighs down the spirit’s striving wings
With labour dire, and mars its birth
With dark imaginings.

“Then do not mourn, oh love, but let
Me pass to my deservèd rest
Ungrieved by thought of thy regret—
By thy tears unoppressed.”

Cold to my side these void arms fell,
Yet grasped my soul the sweet hope giv’n:
“Love, not for long we part!—farewell,
Until we meet in Heav’n!”



The moon dropt in her fleecy bed,
His dim sail faded from the shore,
But Strength was in my heart that said,
“ Love, I shall weep no more.”

SWEET SINGING BIRD

SWEET singing bird ! thy silv'ry notes
Wake in my soul an answ'ring strain,
And rising, ether-light, it floats
Outward to meet that liquid rain
Of melody, that falling round
Makes all the air with rapture thrill,
And rustling leaves give forth a sound
That makes thy song more perfect still.

What secret swells thy plummy throat
That, like to burst with joy, it seems ?
What magic strikes that ringing note
And tunes it to such heav'nly themes ?
How close about their native sphere
The songs of humans seem to cling,
But thy rich strains divinely clear
Speed upward, like an angel's wing !

Go, go, sweet bird ! those songs of thine
 Were meet for higher choirs than ours,
And those bright wings would brighter shine
 'Mid leafage of supernal bow'rs.
My soul, grown faint with ecstasy,
 Drops back to earth and lies supine,
For my weak spirit-minstrelsy
 May never soar like song of thine !

BEREFT

It was a piteous sight to see—
The strong man bent on pray'rful knee,
The woman weeping stormily,
 The little maiden dead :
The busy house, all silent grown,
Void of the joy it once had known,
The music of the childish tone,
 The gentle spirit—fled.

The apple of their eyes—the light
That glorified each tranquil night,
And made e'en gloomy places bright
 With its glad rays,
Had vanished like the fading glow
Of sunset hues on hills of snow,
Or frail sweet flow'rs that only blow
 A few short days.

“Not long, oh pitying Christ,” they said,
“May we be left to mourn our dead,
But follow where her spirit led

To Thine own Breast!

Yet, Jesu ! it is hard to wait
The op’ning of yon pearly gate—
The labour of our souls is great
And we would rest.

“But ah! ‘Not yet,’ we hear Thee say
And e’en Thy face seems turned away
Without one tender smile to-day

For any one.

Yet shall we wait Thy time, oh, God,
And murmur as we kiss the rod
That bows our souls upon the sod—

Thy Will be done !”

THE OLD DIAL

THERE is a dial in a garden old—

Tho' Age hath marred relentlessly its face—
And roses red, and roses white and gold,
Have twined their fragrant beauty round its base.

Yet, closely as each new-grown tendril clings,
And fond as is the roses' sweet caress,
Closer about the stone my mem'ry flings
A thousand tendrils, warm with love's excess.

Once, in an olden time, a lady's bower
Was builded by this column gray and grim,
Whence oft my Sweet and I, at twilight's hour,
Have watched the shadows creeping o'er its rim.

I see her now, my Love, with half-sad eyes,
Turned on the dial first, and then on me—
I hear the echo of her gentle sighs,
Half-playful breathed, and yet, half-earnestly.

Her brown hair, banded with its fillet blue,
Yet rebelling, and shadowing her face—
Her white hand, rivalling the snow in hue,
Clinging to my hand with winning grace.

Her satin petticoat, all borderéd
(With her own hands' deft industry, I knew)
Showing, coquettishly-disorderéd
The outline of her dainty high-heeled shoe.

And, when the twilight faded down the west,
Her timid kiss—her low-breathed, last "Good-
night,"
Soft, by the dial uttered, and her young cheek pressed
Warm on my own. Then fades she from my sight !

Twine, twine ye tendrils round that dial old ;
Hide in your tender green its ravaged face ;
And, bloom, ye roses, red and white and gold,
Where my heart's hopes lie buried at its base !

TO MARY

Oh, Mary!—in whose steadfast eyes
The effulgent light of heaven lies,
On whose vast love, serene and sure,
The hope of sinners rests secure—
When cruel pangs of grief and loss
Nail me, as to a bitter cross—
When I am with dark woes oppressed
And doubts and fears torment my breast—
Oh, Mary!—then thine arms extend
And from all harm my soul defend,
My tender guide and mother be,
And pity, shield, and comfort me!

A CONTEMPLATION

ONE early morn I rose from out my bed,
And drew the curtain from my window-pane ;
The sky was bright and cloudless overhead,
And the green grass was wet with summer rain.
A few warm beams of golden sunlight shone
Upon the trees, where drops of moisture clung,
With tender warmth they danced and played upon
A spider's wondrous wheel of light, which hung
Between two boughs.

Within the sweet dim night
The shrubs into young life the buds had borne ;
Raised were their yellow hearts and petals white,
Smiling a welcome to the glowing dawn.

Beauty, awaking from her couch of rest,
Hastened to lay her mantle 'neath the skies,
The very flowers that nestled in her breast
And caught their lustre from her shining eyes
Seemed to be brighter.

On that beauteous morn
The birds sent forth their notes from every tree,
And from the distant waves where it was born
The zephyr breathed and whispered tenderly.

But, oh, how soon that radiant Summer fled,
How soon, alas! the birds' sweet notes were
dumb!
How soon the flowers shrank sadly in their bed,
And beauty slumbered coldly in a tomb!
With dreary gray the sky was overcast,
The wind with mournful tune wailed o'er the earth,
The waves with angry voice beneath the blast,
Killed the soft zephyr they had given birth.

How like man's life is nature ! In the light
Of morn, joy fills the heart, and hope the breast,
But ere the eve be locked in chilly night—
Poor tired one—he only longs for rest.
E'en now he feels Time's footsteps on his heart,
Imprinting there the solemn measured tread—
Alas ! too soon Youth's fairest dreams depart,
As Youth itself too soon lies cold and dead !

.

And yet, methinks, there are some hopes that grow
Within the mind—that in his after-birth
The joys that his enlightened soul shall know
Must counteract the pain he bore on earth.

DOROTHY

DOROTHY, Dorothy, merry and fair,
With the hazel eyes and the nut-brown hair,
With the round white throat in its pearls bestrung,
And the scarlet cloak on her shoulders flung ;

Her feet

So sweet

In their shoon so neat,

The little red shoon with their buckles bright
Peeping from under her petticoats white.

Dorothy, dear, has promised to wait
At dusk to-night, by the garden gate ;
The maiden so merry and sweet and wise
With the nut-brown hair and the love-lit eyes,

She'll wait

At eight

By the garden gate,

Where laurel trees cluster in friendly guise
To screen all our kisses from prying eyes.

Dorothy mine has promised to be
The dearest of all little women to me ;
She'll braid her tresses so wild and so brown
With statelier smile and a longer gown
 She'll stand,
 A band
 Of gold on her hand
That shows she is mine for the rest of her life,
My neat little, sweet little, loved little wife.

ROSES AND MEMORIES

Oh, withered roses, plucked one happy day
In the rich noon of an impassioned Spring—
What tender mem'ries in your mild decay
Against my heart, in fragrance sweet, ye fling!

Ye mind me of a long-forgotten hour
When she, for whom my heart was like to break,
Chose ye, of all your kindred, from your bow'r
For her adornment—and your beauty's sake!

Happy, indeed, ye were, to find a place
So near her brow, than which ye were less fair,
To lie above the heaven of her face
And breathe your soul out, in her dusky hair!

And, when the day was done, thrice happy I,
 To sit beside her, and to feel her kiss, &
Your fragrance mingling with her gentle sigh,
 Till all the world seemed roses, love, and bliss !

Ah, well, we had our day, sweet withered things—
 Love has been dead, with you, these many years,
But oh, to-night, your perfume round me flings
 Soft memories that drown mine eyes in tears.

WHEN SUMMER COMES

DEAR Love! the day is almost done, and scented
winds are blowing,
And eve, above the quiet world, her pensive charm is
throwing.
On every hill, in every vale, the fireflies' lamps are
burning—
And all is gladness in my heart, because of thy
returning!

The corn is ripe within the field, its golden tassels
bending
Toward the earth from which it sprang, an added
fragrance lending
To every breeze. And round our door, the woodbine
still is twining,
And in the west of heav'n's blue arch, one glist'ning
star is shining.

Across the twilight's deep'ning shades, the Angelus is
pealing,

And, sweetly to my list'ning ear, its melody is steal-
ing—

Ah! 'twas not thus, in other days, we heard that
solemn swelling,

But hand in hand, and in our hearts, love that could
bear no telling.

The long, long days since last we met! Dear, what
shall be the greeting,

When we who parted years ago, to-night again are
meeting?

Shall our caress be sad or sweet? Our words be few
or many?

Shall all regret be buried then, and we no more feel
any?

Dost think the sombre yesterdays that held so much
of sorrow

Shall be forgot and this bright day yield a more
bright to-morrow?

Dost think the eyes that wept so long shall dry their
mournful weeping
And anguish be no more with us, but with the winter
sleeping?

Young Spring hath brought a tender wreath and
placed it on the mountains,
And with her hand hath loosed again the woodland's
frozen fountains :
And, ever, where her lightsome feet, have trodden on
the meadows,
Green grasses rise, in swift assent, as sunshine chases
shadows.

Sweet heralds of the warmth have come across the
short'ning distance
Where Summer shakes her yellow curls and laughs
with glad persistence :
And every note the wild birds sing is with a rapture
ringing
As tho' their hearts were light as mine and could not
hold their singing.

Bright emblems of our life to be, when we are both
together

This sweet and genial Spring-time, and the glowing
Summer weather!

Oh, may our hearts be full of peace, as each new day
we squander,

And sunshine be upon our path, whichever way we
wander!

COULD I RECALL

COULD I recall the sweetest hour
Of all my wayward heart hath known,
Could I but make its mystic dow'r
Of pure delight again mine own,
I'd live once more that lovely hour
When passion first lit up your eyes,
And Life's most blest and potent pow'r
Made earth a paradise.

Could I behold the fairest bloom
That ever in this glad world grew,
Breathe deep its ravishing perfume
And mark again its pearly hue ;
'Twould be that rose you gave, when first
Your kisses on my face were pressed,
And Joy's most heav'nly bud had burst
To blossom in my breast.

Could I but hear the softest strain
That ever thrilled a human heart
With rapture that is almost pain—
Yet pain that is of bliss a part—
’Twould be that perfect chord you smote
When your soul melted into mine,
And Love from his own silver throat
Poured harmony divine.

IF

If only we were children still,
Without a grown-up care to grieve us,
With hearts unseared by any ill
And innocence that would not leave us ;
How happy we two then might be,
I loving you, you loving me,
Two child-hearts bubbling o'er with mirth—
Oh, bright, bright dream, too blest for earth !

If only we might leave the world
Ten thousand swift-passed leagues behind us,
And with some magic screen unfurled
Defy the hand of pain to find us ;
How happy we two then might be,
I loving you, you loving me,
As man and woman, lord and wife—
Oh, dear, dear dream, not ours in life !

If only we were safe with God,
Where pangs of parting could not know us,
With this sphere's woeful journey trod,
And its wild perils far below us ;
How happy we two then might be,
I loving you, you loving me,
Two souls etherealised in bliss—
Oh sweet, sweet dream ! God give us this !

DISILLUSION

No moon, and not a star to show the way,
And every wave more angry than the last ;
God ! Will this darkness never end in day,
Nor horrors of this midnight hour be past ?
The torn and flapping sail, the shattered mast
That groan above me, hold no more of strength,
And may not bear me to the calm I crave—
(Calm ?—*calm for me ?* What calmness but the length
And depth and compass of an ocean grave ?)
Yet, am I frightened at the lashing wave,
Whose phosphorescent gleam is in mine eyes
With madd'ning beauty, even while I raise
Them, wild with yearning, to the low'ring skies
Whose blackness presses hard upon my gaze,
Nor lets my prayer pierce the appalling haze.

On what delightful seas the gold sun shone
But yestermorn ; all flashing in the light
Of sapphire loveliness. The ripples, on
The yellow sand, seemed wooing me to flight,
And, joyous, flew I to the boat, for night
Was many leagues away on heavy wing
That could not bear it hither for long hours.
And, lo ! the sails were set ! Joy seemed to sing
In their wide whiteness ; and the spray in show'rs
Flew round me with light laughter, as from bow'rs
Of fairy revelry. But soon the wind
(Erstwhile so tender) in its wanton way,
Grew fierce, and left the shingle far behind,
Bearing my boat beyond the shining bay,
Into a sea of storms, where breaks no day.

Above the thunders of the storms which roar
About my striving soul, Remembrance hears
A faint, sweet echo, from a distant shore :
And, down my face, the gushing of hot tears
Takes from my heart the apathy that years
Have heaped upon it. But a keener pain
Stirs all the past, that I would fain forget,
And makes its agony mine own again ;

And, if I murmur and mine eyes be wet
With weeping and the passion of regret,
Have I not cause ? Is not his lot most hard,
Who, in the morn, sets out with heart as light
As thistledown ; and, holding as his guard
Against ill-fortune, Faith, that makes life bright,
Finds, ere the time be ripe, day turned to night.

This is the acme of my grief ; that I,
Who, most of all, viewed mankind through a glow
Of gracious seeming and divinity,
Am filled with the unutterable woe
Of disillusion. That faith-slaying throe
Hath scathed my spirit. Yea, for I have known
The garments which my fancy flung around
My earthly idols, torn and rent, and thrown
With ruthless hand, from off the forms they bound,
And, in their piteous nudity, have found
Clay, only clay ! Oh, God ! is not this hard ?
And pity curves no other lips than Thine !
Let not the weakness of man's soul retard
His after progress. Let Thy pity shine
Clear-rayed to guide him to the Port Divine.

'TIS MAY

'Tis May ! it is May ! and the children are thronging
All laden with garlands to grace thy retreat,
Their young bosoms swell with an exquisite longing
To lay their sweet love, with the flow'rs at thy feet.

Lean down to them, Mary, pure fount of affection,
Thro' whom all perfection of tenderness flows—
Fling over their hearts, like a robe of protection,
The bloom of thy virtues, oh, Mystical Rose !

Not laden with blossoms, but burdened and weary
With sorrow, I come to thy sacred retreat ;
No fresh gifts have I, but these offerings dreary,
My tears and my sad heart, to lay at thy feet.

Oh, comfort me, Mary ! walk ever beside me,
Nor turn from my pleading thy countenance bright !
'Tis dark in my soul, and I need thee to guide me
To beautiful dawn, thro' the terrors of night !

LOVE AND HOPE

YEARS, years ago, within a garden—fair
As that bright Eden we look back upon,
Ere Eve had plucked of the forbidden tree
She thought would make God's wisdom all her own—
Two beings dwelt.

And one of them was Love—
Love with the gentle lips and dreaming eyes—
Whose golden hair was like a web of light,
And in whose heart lived tender mysteries.
Beautiful Love!—whose every thought is pure,
And sweeter than the first fresh breath of day!
Wonderful Love!—the wildest of all griefs
Fades into nothingness before thy ray!
Was it not Love, gracious, all-powerful Love
Whose hand Christ held e'en while He bore the Cross
And wore the thorns, and drank the bitter gall
They gave Him when He felt the mighty loss
Of manhood's vigour? And was it not Love—

Forgiving, pitying Love—who bade Him turn
Towards the dying thief, and sweetly say
The words which made his heart with rapture burn?
Oh, Love can even gladden with her ray
The thorny stretch of Life's most rugged way.

.

And one was Hope—Hope with the silver voice,
For whose sweet tones thousands have trembling stood
Waiting for it to fall upon their hearts
Ere the dark waters of the mystic flood
Called Death should close above their aching limbs,
Stilling for ever the fierce grip of pain—
Fearing to part from all they loved on earth,
Till Hope's voice whispered they should meet again,
And Hope's white fingers pointed to the fair,
Bright Land of Promise where the blessèd are!

.

No pain came near them, and no sorrow fell
Upon their lives—their path was bright and straight—
The wind that whistled wildly o'er the earth
Grew soft, and whisp'ring as it passed the gate
Of their sweet home.

The glowing, golden sun
E'en in the winter shone more warmly there,
And in the summer days the waving trees
And flowers screened them from its burning glare.
Happy were they. The peaceful years flew by,
And yet the flight of time had left no trace
Of snow upon the shining head of Hope,
Nor age upon the beauty of Love's face;
Immortal youth seemed stamped upon their forms,
And everlasting peace from earthly storms.

.
But one sad day (alas! that such a day
Should come to mar a joy so great as this!)
A shadow came with stealthy step and slow
To steal away from them their happiness.

.
'Twas in the evening, and the glowing sun
Had gone to rest beyond the hills of light,
All red and gold and purple with the rays
He threw behind in his majestic flight.
Love saw the shadow stealing softly on—
A dark-robed form whose garments made no sound,

Whose footsteps waked no echo to their fall,
Nor stirred the withered leaves upon the ground—
Love saw it come. She felt the burning eyes
Fixed on her own, with hatred fierce and strong,
And as she gazed a sobbing wind awoke,
And whispered to her heart a mournful song.
She felt the chilling pressure of its clasp
Upon her heart—she felt its throbbing cease :
“ Who—who art thou ? ” with tearful voice she asked,
“ Who come to mar the beauty of our peace ? ”
A mocking laugh rang through the ev’ning air,
A laugh that crushed all her heart’s sweetness out—
A hollow voice came to her, deep and low—
A thrilling voice—that echoed “ I am *Doubt!* ”
Hope’s eyes were turned towards the glowing West,
His heart was dreaming of the happy past,
He did not hear that mystic voice’s tone
Nor see the shadow on his dear one cast.

.
Love pined and drooped : the joyous smile of old
Fled from her lips, the light fled from her eyes,
The breath that erstwhile rippled forth in song
Came sadly now in long-drawn quiv’ring sighs.

Hope saw the change, but not to him was known
What blight had fallen on her happiness ;
He tried to lure her smiles and laughter back,
Nor could he lift her from her wretchedness.
“ Why are my dear one’s eyes so sad ? ” he said,
“ Can I not drive her gloomy thoughts away ? ”
He could not see the shadow by her side,
Though, dark, it walked anear her night and day.
She faded like a flow’r plucked by rude hands
And left to wither by some careless one ;
Hope watched, with deep’ning anguish in his eyes,
His Love grow whiter, with each setting sun.

Hope clasped her wildly to his fainting heart—
“ I cannot let thee go, my own—my love ! ”
She gazed into his weeping eyes, and breathed,
“ Nay, say not so ; we soon shall meet above !
Kiss me again—again—and say good-bye,
Sweet Hope who blessed me all my life,” she said.
“ Do not forget thy Love too quickly, Hope—
Think of her sometimes still, when she is dead.”
A light broke on her face, as if the heav’n’s
Had oped to give some welcome spirit bliss ;

Hope bent his lips upon her, weeping low,
And Love's sweet soul went out in that last kiss !
Grieving, he laid her on a mossy bank,
Where lilies bloomed and roses shed their breath.
" Hope cannot live when Love is dead," he wept,
And kissed the pallid face, and prayed for death.

A spirit-form came to him in the night—
He felt its presence in the chilly air ;
" Who—who art thou?" he cried in accents wild ;
A hollow voice replied, " I AM DESPAIR."
It drew Hope's trembling form within its arms,
Close, close it prest him 'gainst its bosom bare,
Until his heart was still.

And so Hope died,
Locked in the stony arms of wild DESPAIR!

AT MIDNIGHT

THEY laid her to rest when the pale moon was shining,
Alone 'neath the trees where the soft shadows
creep,
And nightingales sing where the ivy is twining
And lull her to sleep.

In the depths of the midnight the death-bell is tolling,
The night echoes wake from the caves where they
hide,
And out on the white sea an anthem is rolling
Which sobs in the tide.

The mourners go back to the toil-smitten city,
With eyes that are dim with the tears they have
shed,
Their heart-strings are swept with the hand of great
pity
And love for the dead.

The soft wind is sighing above her, and weeping,
And scatt'ring the dead leaves in showers around,
But she heeds them not—she is tranquilly sleeping
Under the mound.

THEY TELL ME

THEY tell me you are happy, dear—
That you have quite forgot—
That, on your mind, our fateful year
Has left not one faint blot.
How much I hope that this is so
I have no words to tell,
And if I had, *you* would not know,
Who once knew all things well.

I look not to the future days
With roses for my head—
My sad thoughts wind thro' lonelier ways
The dead past, with its dead ;
Its withered leaves alone are mine,
Its ghosts of hopes and fears,
Yet so you live in sun and shine,
I am content with tears.

I sometimes think how wise was fate
That turned your warm love cold ;
My arms were not the blest estate
That such as you should hold.
Yet while that vision charmed my gaze,
Its glory filled my heart,
Nor warned me that our sep'rate ways
Lay pole and pole apart.

They tell me you have quite forgot,
And this, I hope, is true—
Sunshine and roses be your lot,
Devoid of rain and rue ;
I stretch my hands toward the place
Where you, in sweet peace, live,
And all the joys the heav'ns embrace
I call on them to give.

REMEMBER

If you should waken on some distant morning
From out a dream wherein you saw my face,
And held me—as you held me in the dawning
Of your strange passion—in a swift embrace :
Remember that my love has never faltered,
That, on your truth, my faith reposes yet—
That, though with seasons you, perchance, have altered,
My heart will not forget!

If, in some hour, your heart grows big with yearning
For some kind word to soothe away a pain—
For some kind hand to cool the fevered burning
Of eyes that long to weep, yet long in vain—
Remember that my tongue is ever weaving
A thousand blessings for your life to wear ;
And, if my hand could ease your heart of grieving,
Think you, would grief be there?

Should friends forsake, and those you love forget you,

And e'en the face of God seem turned away—

Should Doubt and Fear on every side beset you

And, in your misery, you cease to pray—

Remember that I will forsake you never,

Tho' others shun you, I will not forget :

My pray'rs are yours for ever and for ever,

For, oh, I love you yet!

DE PROFUNDIS

Was there ever striving stranger?—
I am fleeing from a danger,
From a wild and subtle danger, and I dare not look
 behind
Lest my courage fail and languish,
Lest I faint and die of anguish,
Lest the travail of my spirit break the purpose of my
 mind.

Hold me from the tone impassioned,
And the love so strangely fashioned,
That it lures me to destruction with the touch of
 poisoned lips ;
From the light that lies adreaming
In the eyes of gentle seeming,
And the madness of the fever that is in those finger-
 tips.

With my woe my heart is breaking,
And my soul's foundations shaking,
And the pray'rs I breathe to heaven bring no solace to
my breast ;
With the terror of my passion
I am spent and wan and ashen,
And the world is one wild conflict that gives no
surcease or rest.

Will no radiant to-morrow
Light this midnight of my sorrow ?
Will no bright awaking lift me from the horror of my
dream ?
From its meshes have I striven
To be freed, yet am I driven,
Like a frail and withered leaf adown a wide and awful
stream.

Let me reach the height I yearn for—
Let me grasp the good I burn for—
Let the grosser thoughts of earth fall from me like a
garment's length ;

In my soul's regeneration
Let me plead for sweet salvation,
In God's gracious understanding let my weakness be
my strength.

.

I have wrestled with my madness—
I will dwell no more on gladness
That finds issue thro' a channel where no good can
ever be—
I have lapsed, but am forgiven,
Like a child I turn to heaven—
*Like a little child, oh, Father, let me lean my weight
on Thee!*

THE VOYAGERS

A GRAY-WHITE bird thro' the morn's soft seas
Her love's swift boat came sailing,
The mist-clouds, stirred by a fresh'ning breeze,
Across the heav'ns were trailing ;
And a young sky peeped thro' its draperies
Like a vestal through her veiling.

The sun shot up with a beaming face,
His bright robes round him clinging ;
The glad waves danced with a witching grace
To the shore, their spray outflinging,
And the gay wind ran them a laughing race
Thro' the answ'ring cordage ringing.

Her sparkling eyes were the lode-stars bright
That urged his sail to fleetness,

Her echoing voice the music light
Wherein was every sweetness,
And her circling arms a girdle white
That compassed the world's completeness.

She stepped aboard in the wid'ning day,
The smooth sails thrilled above her,
The blue waves sent inquisitive spray
Her beauties to discover ;
And the wet wind flew in passionate way
To greet her like a lover.

The gold sun gleamed : but her golden hair
His brightness was outvying,
And on they sped thro' the salt-keen air,
The sea-gulls with them flying,
And away in the distance soft and fair,
They left the dim shore lying.

And back again, from the laughing seas
Their boat shall bear them never,
Their love shall sweeten each passing breeze
Till Life and Love shall sever,

And the waves their mystic melodies
Have ceased to sing for ever.

A gray-white bird on the rippling seas
Their boat is ever sailing,
And mist-clouds, stirred by the fresh'ning breeze
Across the heav'ns are trailing ;
And the soft skies peep thro' their draperies
Like vestals thro' their veiling.

The gold sun gleams : but her golden hair
His brightness is outvying—
And on they speed thro' the spray-wet air
The sea-gulls with them flying—
And away in the distance soft and fair
They see the dim shore lying.

CANCIONET

YEA, I have let a thousand dreams
Resolve themselves on thee,
Forgetful that thou did'st not give
One single thought to me.

If, as 'tis said, love, love begets,
Surely thou lovest me—
For had I twenty hearts to break
I'd give them all to thee.

Measure for measure do I ask
That I might happy be—
Thou art my love, my hope, my life—
Why lovest thou not me?

FOR HER

THERE is no little heart so sweet
As this sweet-heart of mine ;
Nor any bosom so replete
With innocence as thine.
No other arms, in whose caress
Lurks such a subtle tenderness ;
No other hand so kind as this
Nor any lips so warm to kiss.

There are no eyes so deep and blue
As these I hold with mine ;
Nor any love so firm and true,
Sweet-heart, as this of thine.
There is no voice so blithely free,
Nor tuned with such divinity ;
No other step so glad and light,
And, oh, no soul so pure and white.

There is no prayer whose pleading tone
 Moves heav'n so swift as thine :
(I would thy faith wert all mine own
 That God might answer mine)—
And well *thou* know'st what tender pray'r
My soul would ask that God to hear—
“ May He so bless this life of mine
That I may make a heav'n of thine.”

TO KNOW

THAT these two souls, who loved each other so
Shall feel that pulse no more ; that when they meet
The coldness of averted eyes will show
How wide the chasm yawning at their feet.

That they, who thought no earthly hour so blest
As that which brought one to the other's side
Shall shun such meeting : and that in her breast
No tender wish for him shall more abide.

That in her heart (oh, verdant pasture-land
Of graciousness!) his heart may find no place—
That th' restraining influence of her hand
Shall be withdrawn—the sweetness of her face

Turned from him alway! Is not this enough
To quench hope's beacon, and to bid despair
Be as his comrade? (Ah! the way is rough
That leads to heav'n—and who awaits him there?)

And he had dreamed that in the gentle guise
Of friendship, they two, yet might sometimes meet,
And with the sympathy that filled her eyes
His darksome days be made less incomplete.

(But, days dawn with a wealth of golden dreams
That vanish ere the sun be set in night ;
And Hope, who chants so many flatt'ring themes
Too oft deceives, and leaves us with the light.)

He dare not question if her love be dead—
For who shall ask this of a woman's heart
When Faith and all that made Earth glad is fled,
And life itself strives dumbly to depart?

To call her "friend," and hold her by that name
Were better than to call another "love,"
But he hath sinned : and nought that breathes of shame
May touch the shrine that holds her far above

All lesser clay. Yet, spite of the vain grief
That breaks his heart, Thought sometimes stirs the
strings

Of feeling, with vibrations vague and brief
And soft as is the whirr of spirit-wings—

And these speak of another time and place—

Distant, perchance, when life's flame flickers low—

For past love's sake, one sweet and last embrace

May tell him all his being longs to know.

So, in the span that lies 'twixt Time and Space

And girds with mystery, God and His blest,

He, looking in the heaven of her face,

May feel his soul sink tranquilly to rest.

LOVE AND FAITH

I WILL not think you did not love me
Because your heart withheld so much—
The golden stars that shine above me,
Still light the world they cannot touch.
And though our hands met but to sever,
And though our lives be lived apart,
Still shall your memory, for ever,
Be as a star within my heart.

I will not think, though fate bereft me
Of you, that I have loved in vain,
That, when you said good-bye and left me,
You did not mean to come again.
For this, to love would be a treason,
And love and faith were then estranged,
And I should fear each passing season
Had changed you more than I have changed.

I will not think that to remember
 Would make you wish we had not met ;
That, with return of dear September,
 Your heart would beat with this regret.
For this would make you seem less tender
 Than all my thoughts would have you be,
The past would lose its hallowed splendour
 And you be but a grief to me.

ISOLT

How late the hour when Isolt passed
None in the village knew ;
Sleep held their heavy eyelids fast.
None watched her as she flew,
Her sweet looks wan and overcast,
The quiet midnight through.

The moon was but a ghostly thing
Set in a tearful sky,
The hills loomed grim and menacing,
Their frowning brows reared high,
And one wild bird on sable wing
Whirred his dull plumage by.

It seemed each shadow in the street
Held some dark shape of dread :

She wept with terror, that her feet,
At every hurrying tread,
Waked hollow echoings, that beat
Behind her, as she fled.

To her distraught imaginings,
Each gaping porchway cast
A thousand weirdly-fashioned things
About her as she passed,
They met her with low whisperings
And staring looks aghast.

Once paused she, where a casement-light
Shone forth with lustre mild,
Where a young mother, thro' the night
Drowsed by her fretful child;
And whose soft breast, a brief respite,
Contentment had beguiled.

Onward, again, her footsteps pressed—
The rough way bruised her feet :
Her soul so shook within her breast
That mortal pains were sweet,

And each new pang her frame confessed,
But made her step more fleet.

“ Oh, God ! ” she sobbed, “ how long the way !
Oh, Christ ! how wan the moon !
Grant that some friendlier guiding-ray
Fall on my vision soon,
For much I would 'twere blessèd day,
In place of night's dark noon ! ”

Still flew her feet : her scant robes streamed,
Loose, on the shiv'ring air,
And wide with woe, her wild eyes gleamed
Out from her tangled hair ;
And over her white face, it seemed,
Quivered her soul's despair.

Here, on the battlefield, blood-red,
Dawn held its timid sway,
When Isolt's faint and fearful tread
Passed on its fevered way,
Where the uncovered, silent dead,
All cold and sightless lay.

One smil'd, as tho' in fairer land
A happier path he trod,
And one lay stiff—his rigid hand
Clenched in the bloody sod—
And one with looks composed and grand,
Stared dumbly up to God.

Ah! 'twas a woeful sight for eyes
So young and kind to view;
She scanned each form in wild surmise,
Passing the slain ranks through;
For much she feared Death's stern disguise
Hung on the face she knew.

And here is he, on whom she flings
Herself, her anguished cry
Startles the vultures whose dread wings
Flap ominously nigh,
And piercing the dense air, it rings
Shrill through the very sky.

The crowning grief of Life's long years
'Tis her's in youth to know

She folds him in her arms : her tears
Rain on him in their flow,
And wildly, in his lifeless ears,
She pours her love and woe.

.
It is enough. Above the wood
The red sun rose on high,
His flaming sword in angry mood
Flashed thro' the sullen sky,
And on the field, the carrion-brood,
Ominous, hovered nigh.

ENSHRINED

DEEP hidden in my heart of hearts
Art thou, oh, my Adored One!
Life's most impassioned hope departs,
Eternally Deplored One ;
And thou no more art hope of mine
Since Death hath bade us sever,
Yet have I built a secret shrine
Wherein thou liv'st forever.

Thou know'st how many woes lie deep
Within my soul's recesses,
What vigils through the night I keep—
My spirit's strange distresses :
Yet, in my inmost consciousness
Thine image bright is shining,
And, *there* is peace from woe's excess—
Surcease from vain repining.

My heart of hearts Remembrance makes
Thy sacred place of dwelling ;
No jarring note of discord breaks
The cadence therein swelling ;
No pangs tumultuous survive
Beyond that secret portal—
There, thoughts of thee alone, may live
Calm, changeless, and immortal.

Thou'rt hidden in my heart of hearts
Deep, deep, oh, my Adored One !
Life's most entrancing hope departs
Eternally Deplored One.
And thou, no more, art hope of mine
Since Fate hath bade us sever—
Yet have I built, to thee, a shrine,
Where thou art mine forever !

A MEMORY

THE moon from out the dreaming sea,
Rose in her silver majesty,
 Her mist-robes pearly white ;
And ruined tow'r and minaret,
Where passion-blooms and ivy met,
 Shone faintly in her light.

A nightingale, ecstatic, pressed
A thorn against her plumaged breast,
 And, sweeter for the pain,
Trilled her wild plaint of love, whose swell
Waked the cool air through which it fell
 To rapture, at the strain.

I could not sleep : a fitful breeze
Lured me to walk beneath the trees
 That marked the shelving shore ;

The waves ran with a voice so low,
I scarce could hear them in their flow,
Nor see the foam they bore.

My feet were on the gleaming sand,
That held as in a golden band
The sapphire of the sea ;
My eyes were where a misty ridge
Of moonlight made a fairy bridge
To realms of phantasy.

And, childishly, my wistful heart
Saw mystic forms of fancy start
To life, and wave their hands ;
It seemed that I, to reach their home
Of gold and light, and fleece and foam,
Had but to cross the sands.

Ah ! Christ ! in pity dim the sight
That filled my eyes that Summer night,
Beneath that moon-swept sky !
I crossed : I saw the dream-bridge fall—
No mystic fays were there at all—
But, cold and pallidly

A still form lay with pulseless breast,
And white hands claspt in marble rest,
 And lips devoid of breath ;
A young, sweet face, divinely fair,
With sea-weed caught in tangled hair,
 And eyelids closed in death.

The little waves with soft caress,
Played through and through each twisted tress
 That floated o'er her face ;
Their theme was all of joy bereft,
And, sobbing, on her cheek they left
 Their kisses' foamy trace.

I knew the hand that sent her there
With fear-wide eyes, and unkempt hair,
 And swift feet, fever-shod !
I knew what woes beset her mind—
What shudd'ring terrors bade her find
 This wat'ry track to God !

(And surely He, who each heart scans
With pity that surpasseth man's,
 Will not deny her rest !)

I could not move : my trembling tongue,
In passion, on her sweet name hung,
And anguish tore my breast !

The moon from out the dreaming sea,
May rise in silver majesty
With mist-robcs softly white ;
And ivied tow'r and minaret
And passion-blooms, with night dews wet,
May shimmer in her light ;

The nightingale, her thrilling plaint,
With ecstasy, grown tensely faint,
May pour upon the ear ;
And fairy-hands, with shafts of light,
May build their bridges, frail and bright,
Through many a golden year ;

But, always on the yellow sands,
With waxen cheek, and folded hands,
And lips devoid of breath,
My soul shall see, in dark despair,
A girl's young face, divinely fair,
Locked in the sleep of death.

I WONDER

I WONDER if you ever heave a sigh
For those dear days, since dead, when you and I
Were friends—or do you ever sigh at all?—

I wonder!

I wonder if you ever shed a tear
Of softness for the girl you once called dear
Unto your heart—or do you weep at all?—

I wonder!

I wonder if your pulses ever thrill
With passing memories against your will;
Or did you ever thrill for me at all?—

I wonder!

I wonder if you ever feel regret
For that which makes my eyes so often wet;
Or if regret can touch your heart at all?—

I wonder!

I wonder if you meant to break my heart
Knowing our lives, alway, must be apart ;
Or if you gave a thought to hearts at all ?—

I wonder !

I wonder if you ever pause to pray
That truer friends might rise upon my way ;
Or do you ever pray for me at all ?—

I wonder !

LUCY

LITTLE river, bright and fleet,
 Winding to the silver sea,
Soft upon your bosom sweet
Lilies fair, I send to greet
Her I loved. Beside her feet
 Lay them tenderly.

Sure the winds that heard my woe,
 Breathed it far along your shore,
Bade your laughter's happy flow
Sink to cadence deep and slow,
Passing by for that you know
 Lucy is no more.

Mind you where the shining wheat
 Dreams above your crystal wave?

There, within a dim retreat
Where the willow shadows meet,
Shutting out the noon-day heat,
Lies my Lucy's grave.

There I'd have you stay your flight
To the far-off silver sea—
Telling her that day or night
Everything that meets my sight—
E'en each star, remote and white—
Grieves for her with me.

Tell her, too, in utterance low—
Ere you reach the wide sea's keep—
That her lover loved her so,
All the world is wild with woe
Since her grave was digged; and, oh,
Would he, too, might sleep!

DOROTHY, I LOVE YOU

Oh, Dorothy, the sun is high,
Of love the birds are singing,
The thistle-down across the sky
A fairy flight is winging.
And, oh, beyond the meadow fair
The clover-heads perfume the air,
And silver streamlets, everywhere
Their mystic chimes are ringing !

I would my tongue might steal the strain
The gay birds trill above you—
'Twere centred in this glad refrain,
“ Oh, Dorothy, I love you ! ”
And would the light breeze wand'ring by
But lend me her persuasive sigh,
Its thrilling tone, oh, Dorothy,
To hear my plaint would move you !

The world to me were wond'rous bright

If mine were your sweet glances,

Whose sparkling beam the rosy light

Of morning-tide enhances.

And oh, how blest this life would be

Did you but deign to cast on me

That smile, whose subtle witchery

With joy the heart entrances !

Then let the light breeze wand'ring by

Breathe on your lips a potion

Of love so sweet, its ecstasy

Will equal my emotion.

And let the birds that sing on high

In their delightful rhapsody

Speak one blest word, oh, Dorothy,

Of all my deep devotion !

ACACIA

I WOULD not give my one dear friend
For twenty ardent lovers—
Love, oft too quickly finds an end,
And, to its grief, discovers
That all its dreams were transient dreams—
The heav'nly-sweet creation,
The heart had borrowed from the gleams
Of fond imagination!

Ah, who but they that feel its chains
May guess the perfect union,
The pleasure that the spirit gains
From friendship's sweet communion?
A bond of Peace its gentle kiss
With gems of Faith encrusted,
For friendship asks no more than this—
To trust and to be trusted.

Let those who bask in Love's warm beam
 Live ever in that gladness—
I am prepared with this grand theme
 To banish all my sadness!
I would not give my one dear friend
 Nor our sweet counsel sever
For twenty lovers. Love may end,
 But friendship lives for ever!

MARIA

WHAT time the rosy shafts of breezy morning
 Shoot, arrow-like, athwart the opal sky,
And the red sun, his misty vesture scorning,
 Springs upward, in his naked majesty—
When every bird, whose note is tuned to lightness
 Swells out his throat, and prunes his brilliant wing,
And shaking off the dew that makes his brightness
 The greater, hies him heavenward to sing—
Such time as this, Maria, is my dreaming
 Turned into sunshine, where thou art the ray
Oh, Morning Glory! And thy smile's soft beaming
 Is as my safe-guard, through th' ensuing day!

What time the first faint star, at even's falling
 Sends forth her lustre, virginal and shy,
And trembling, seems upon her sisters calling
 To light their lamps and hang them in the sky—

As though she, in that solitary shining,
Doubting her strength to light such space as ours,
Pleads, till to her behest, her kin inclining,
Pour their united radiance down in show'rs—
Such time as this, Maria, is my dreaming,
Turned into courses where thou art the light ;
And much I hope, Mild Evening Star ! thy gleaming
Will guide me safe through the ensuing night !

HER PORTRAIT

HER eyes are miracles of light
Wherein no guile is sleeping,
Stars that from some celestial height
God gave into her keeping.

Her cheeks are as the lily white,
So stainless is their seeming,
Twin-blossoms, gathered where the light
Of coolest dawn lay dreaming.

Her lips are rose-buds, steeped in dew,
Whereon all freshness lingers,
Blooms that were painted, where they grew
By Summer's radiant fingers.

Her hair is as the raven's wing,
So dusky are its tresses,
Clouds on whose ebon shadowing
Rest midnight's soft caresses.

And, oh, her heart, her gentle heart
(Whose love to me is given),
It only has its counterpart
Far up in highest heaven.

A DREAM

Ан Hope!—my Hope!

Last night I dreamed that you and I were sailing
Upon a tranquil ocean, wide and vast ;
Far from the mournful world and all its wailing—
Forgotten and forgetful of the Past,
Which was so sad. A radiant moon was beaming
Above our heads ; and over sea and sky
Her soft light fell ; and golden stars were gleaming
Like lust'rous gems in heav'ns blue canopy.
Far as my eye could see, the waveless ocean
Stretched, like a plain of shining liquid light ;
On which there was no sound, no life, no motion,
No presence, save our own. Eternal Night,
With wide-spread wings, where peace and rest were
sleeping,
Reigned calm, supreme, devoid of grief or tears ;

Methought we never knew the pain of weeping—
We, who have wept through all these bitter years.
Ah Hope !—my Hope !

Ah Hope !—my Hope !
Beneath the moon, your golden hair was gleaming,
And I could see, reflected in your eyes—
Dear mirrors of your thoughts—the tender dreaming
Of your white soul. Yet, felt I no surprise
That you were there. A mystic slumber stealing
Over my senses, filled my heart with rest ;
All earthly passion, and all earthly feeling
Of pain or pleasure, died within my breast.
And so, methought, we should drift on, forever,
Into the silent distance, where the sea
Seemed blending with the sky ; and God should sever
The spell which bound us so mysteriously.
But Hope ! my Hope ! I am no longer sleeping,
I am awake and know that you are dead ;
I gaze into the dreary night ; and, weeping,
Mourn for the happiness forever fled !
Ah Hope !—my Hope !

MY DEAR ONE

SWEET are the wind's soft sighs
As they breathe from the fragrant South—
But never so sweet as the breath that dies
In a sigh from my dear one's mouth!

Red is the blushing rose
Whose nectar the honey-bee sips—
But never so red as the bloom that glows
On the curve of my darling's lips!

Deep is the azure hue
That colours the evening skies,
But never so deep as the pensive blue
That darkens my dear one's eyes!

Clear are the notes in Spring
Of the song birds that rejoice—
But never so clear as the notes that ring
In my dear one's thrilling voice!

Bright are the golden dyes,
The wattle bloom waves in the air—
But never so bright as the tint that lies
On the gold of my darling's hair!

White as the souls that rest
In the beautiful courts above
Is the guileless heart that beats in the breast
Of my sweet and gentle love!

PITY ME

Ask me no more to tell thee that I love thee—
How often have mine eyes proclaimed their woe?
(For love of thee ~~is~~ woe!) And can I move thee
By words of love to say that I may go?

Too cold am I, thou deem'st, to feel the passion
That stirs thy soul and calls on me to stay!—
Yet, if I leave thee, 'tis for thy salvation,
And thou wilt say of me, "Well done," some day.

Can'st thou not learn how wild is my emotion?
And that my spirit faints with grief for thee?
Canst thou not sound the depths of my devotion
And, in *thy* need of pity, pity me?

Fate hath decreed that we should part forever—

I am not all that thou would'st have me be—

And if my soul wert known to thee, ah, never

In life or death could'st thou feel love for me!

Nay, plead no more : I cannot, dare not listen—

Hear'st thou my sighs? And see'st thou not my
tears?

How, thick upon my pallid cheek they glisten?—

And have my pray'rs no meaning in thine ears?

Thou wilt forget that I have lived to grieve thee

With broken vows and hopes that mocked thee so—

So great my love, I dare not to deceive thee,

I would not break thy heart, so I must go.

I'll hide me where thy pleading cannot reach me—

Our paths lie wide as pole and pole apart!

Then let me go. Ah, cease thou to beseech me:

I love thee far too well to break thy heart!

FORGOTTEN

AND can it be so short a while
Has passed since last we met ?
And is it true a few swift days
Could make thy heart forget ?

The tears I shed upon thy cheek
Have scarce had time to dry ;
And tho' the music of thy voice
Still thrills my memory,

Thou hast forgotten all our love,
And, haply, where thou art,
Not one fond word of all we spake
Finds echo in thy heart.

But, since it be my lot to grieve
And so thou art content,
No word of mine shall ask of thee
One tear for passion spent.

Yet, sweetly as a dream long-past,
Returns, in after years
And mem'ry with her magic touch
Unseals the fount of tears.

Those brief love-passages of ours,
And those dear looks of thine
Shall ever find a dwelling-place
Within this heart of mine !

SHADOWS

YEA, though athwart the sullen brow of night
No glimmer shines to guide us on our way—
Though through the dreary dark no ray of light
Falls on our path—ah, surely, soon the day,
With floods of golden light, shall bathe the earth,
Chasing away the clouds that on us rest,
And the wild thoughts to which the night gave birth
Flee when the world is by the sun caressed.

BUT ONE OF THESE

WERE I a bird with silver throat

I'd pour such heav'nly strains about me
That you, for whom I'd sing each note,
Would not be one brief hour without me.
So ravishing I'd make my song

With love's divinest rapture ringing,
You could not choose the whole day long
But hang enchanted on my singing!

WERE I a rose-bud gemmed with dew

Blowing within your garden, sweetly,
So rich I'd bloom—so bright of hue—

I'd win your gen'rous praise completely ;
And, standing by, the while I shed
My sweets around me and above me,
You'd pluck me from my od'rous bed,
And, for a space, at least, you'd love me !

And, since I'm neither bird nor rose,
But just a simple loving woman,
Give me your heart, and I'll disclose
A thousand sweetnesses all human.
You could not choose but feel delight
In love that has no bounds—no measure—
I'd live to make your whole life bright,
Or die to give you one hour's pleasure!

IN MEMORIAM

SLEEP well and soundly, Noble One,
Whose days were brief, whose errors few,
Whose good deeds lit a lamp that shone
Our ways of darkness through !

You need not think we grudge the rest
That holds the form we used to love ;
The marble-calm that locks your breast
We would not wish to move.

And yet, we cannot choose but shed
A few hot tears of woe replete,
To think the grave should be your bed,
Your robe a winding-sheet !

"'Twere over-early, yet," we say—
She, your true love, and I, your friend—
"To hide him in the callow clay
Where slumber hath no end.

"A little while to wake and live,
In warmth of love and friendship's bliss;
And after *that* the grave might give
Her cold and shudd'ring kiss!"

We would not have you mar your rest
With pity's pangs for those you leave;
Though sorrow still lives in the breast,
We do not *wildly* grieve.

The cypress waving o'er your tomb
In tender dusk enshrouds the spot;
And roses breathe in sweet perfume
"You are not yet forgot!"

It does not need a gleaming cross
Whereon a gold name mocks the eyes,
To tell how heavy was the loss
Of him who 'neath it lies.

The hands that most you loved to bless
On earth have made your grave a bow'r
Of every fragrant loveliness
That holds the name of flow'r.

Your Alice still at eventide,
When shadow lies on moor and fen,
And wraps the earth in silence wide,
Steals softly through the glen.

And none who guess her mournful tale
Would ask her whither wendeth she ;
They fling about her grief a veil
Of tend'rest sanctity.

For well they know her love was he
Who sleeps within the kirk-yard gloom,
And that her changeless trysting-tree
Waves o'er your lonely tomb.

And so 'twill be until the end
Which soon her steps must overtake,
And I—who was your closest friend
Am hers—for your dear sake.

Dream softly, sweetly, True and Tried
Whose days were brief, whose errors few,
Whose deeds were as a lamp that wide
And far its lustre threw.

A REVERIE

I THOUGHT the harp for ever slept,
I deemed its pulse was still,
Because my fingers could not wake
The soft notes at my will.
When earthly thoughts encompassed me,
The gentle music died,
And I had feared the harp I loved
Was taken from my side.

Oh, weary have I felt, and sad,
And only longed for rest,
When, low and sweet, the soft strains woke,
And echoed in my breast.
Dear spirit-voices spoke to me,
Fair visions faintly gleamed,
And breathed upon my memory
Some music I had dreamed.

Fain would I voice the thrilling song
That wanders on the breeze,
That echoes in the flowing stream,
And sighs among the trees.
But my crude words can ne'er express
The sweets of thought like this,
And my glad heart may never tell
But only feel its bliss.

ONE WORD

I DID but ask one little word
Of tenderness begot,
One whisper through this silence heard,
And yet—you gave it not!

It was not pleading vows nor sighs
I craved of you to give,
Nor anguished tears from those kind eyes
Where joy was wont to live :

Nay, none of these, my gentle dear,
For they my strength would shake,
And every pledge of this past year
My traitor-heart forsake.

'Twas but one soft assuring word,
That I am not forgot—
One whisper, through this silence heard,
And yet—you gave it not!

FAREWELL, BELOVED

FAREWELL, beloved!—our star hath set—
Our radiant star, so late to rise—
That, in the hour when first we met
Dawned, heav'nly clear, upon our eyes,
Nor presaged soon what wild regret
Should watch it fade adown love's skies.

Do you remember that blest night,
When, by the silver-sounding sea,
And, 'neath our own star's glory bright
We breathed our vows of constancy?
How could we dream such hallowed light
Would set in grief for you and me?

You held my hands within your own,
So close it seemed they could not part ;

And joy itself thrilled in the tone
That trembling, gushed from your full heart,
And, to your eyes, all shining grown,
I saw the tears of gladness start!

I tread a lonely path to-day
Whose bitterness you cannot guess—
It one time seemed the dreary way
Your gentle voice would cheer and bless :
But hope held evanescent sway
Above my dream of happiness!

Farewell, beloved!—the same bright sea
That heard our vows, now in its swell
Laments our hopes : and mournfully
My heart repeats its solemn knell!
Oh, Love! a life of agony
Lies in this last sad word, "Farewell!"

THE WEDDING DAY

JASPER chants a joyful theme
At his lady's casement ;
Sun-kissed stars of jasmine gleam
All about the basement.
Softly coos the list'ning dove
From the elder-berry ;
All the air is warm with love
All the world is merry !

"Sweet, this is our wedding day,"
Jasper warbles blithely ;
Sun-kissed stars of jasmine sway
In the breezes lithely.
"All the birds of Spring have met—
Gold, the sun is gleaming ;
Day is but imperfect yet—
Rosa still is dreaming !"

Hid behind her curtain white,
Rosa wakes and listens ;
Shining dew of soft delight
In her fond eye glistens.
Burning blush on brow and cheek
Tell her heart's devotion ;
Lips too tremulous to speak,
Curve in sweet emotion !

From her slumber high above
Rosa's mother waking,
Hears the song of youthful love
From the garden breaking.
Kindly tears o'erflow her eyes,
Chasing fast each other—
Who may tell what memories
Thrill this gentle mother ?

Soft the casement wide she flings—
Jasper's song of gladness
Gaily through the morning rings,
Changing all her sadness !
"Foolish youth," the matron cries,
Bending to deride him ;

Yet the laughter in her eyes
Says she does not chide him !

In her bridal, white array,
Rosa's sisters dress her ;
Every hand is kind to-day,
Eager to caress her.
Sun-kissed stars of jasmine gleam
'Gainst her forehead's whiteness—
Joys beneath her eyelids dream,
Earth is full of brightness !

From the church the wedding-bells
Send their music madly ;
Now in tender-wise it dwells
On the wind half sadly ;
Now with echoes wild and sweet
All the air is shaking—
Fitting sound for joyous feet
To their rhythm waking.

All the village-folk have met
On the grassy meadows ;
Sweet the day ; dawn's kisses yet
Rest among the shadows.

All is gladness in the land,
Every heart rejoices—
Youth and maiden, hand in hand,
Whisper in low voices.

Slow the purple evening falls
Twilight comes unhidden ;
Faint and low the cuckoo calls
In the pine-trees hidden.
In the west, the golden sun
Swoons on banks of glory—
Jasper's wedding-song is done,
Told is Rosa's story.

Soft, into the dying day,
By the dewy meadows,
Hand in hand they glide away,
Through the land of shadows.
Silent, now, the pensive dove,
Moon-kissed jasmine weeping,
All the night is sweet with love—
All the world is sleeping.

GOOD-NIGHT

"GOOD-NIGHT, good-night," she said, and bending over
Her casement, blew to me a farewell kiss
Freighted with tenderness. Around, above her
The honey-suckle, and the loveliness
Of roses blossomed. In her golden tresses
The moonbeams played in tremulous delight,
The while the ambient air, with cool caresses
Breathed on her cheek a soft and sweet "good-
night."

"Good-night," I said, and knew not that the morrow
Would dawn upon a reign of burning tears,
And the dark presence of a heavy sorrow
That must be mine throughout the waste of years
The future holds. Now faded are the roses,
The honey-blooms are dead : gone is the light
Of eyes that blest me : and her heart reposes
In quietude, that speaks a long "good-night."

“Good-night, good-night.” The low wind as it passes

Her casement, sighs, as mourning her it kissed

Of old so tenderly : and in the grasses

Above her grave moans sadly : while a mist—

Pale, goss’mer-like—as tho’ the night were weeping

Hangs o’er the vale and hides the cross of white

That marks the resting-place where she is sleeping—

To whom my heart has breathed its last “good-
night.”

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